

St Mary & St John CE Primary School

Headteacher: Elizabeth Burton



Newsletter 14: 3.02.21

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are safe and well. The floods around Oxford are quite spectacular so it has made getting out even harder. Our staff found last week hard going and we're all glad it's now February. January was a tough month all round. The staff are really missing all the daily interactions which makes life in a busy school so rewarding. A pat on the back for getting through it!

We have a tentative date for schools reopening of Monday 8 March which we are hoping will happen. The vaccine roll out is going well with health staff working round the clock to give the jab! Heroic! School staff are now encouraged to use a home test, known as a Lateral Flow Test (LFT), to monitor infection rates in school. We had a large delivery of these last week. These are straightforward and all results, positive or negative, are reported. There is a lot of debate around school staff being vaccinated but, at the moment, the home tests are recommended as the monitoring tool.

A Big Thank You! We received a huge box from parents and carers unexpectedly. Inside the box were lots of pink egg boxes each containing 6 mini cup cakes with chocolate and vanilla icing. They were absolutely delicious and thank you so much for thinking of us and treating us. It was perfect timing as last week proved one of the hardest with us all feeling some campaign fatigue! Needless to say, the cakes have all gone but we've saved the egg boxes for art purposes!

We are continuing to monitor home learning on Seesaw and are impressed with the children's work with 99% of children engaging in remote learning. The staff are conscious, however, of the amount of screen time involved, especially as some children like to play computer games on their play station outside of schoolwork. We are going to try for a screen free afternoon once a week. The teachers will let your children know about this during the week. This week is Children's Mental Health Week with the theme of *Express Yourself*. There are lots of ideas online (!) but many of the ideas do not require a screen. Children's well-being, along with parents/carers and staff well-being are at the forefront of our minds. The governors are considering overall well-being at all their meetings too.

A bit of playground news. We've had two new basketball posts installed on the tarmac playground with the hoops a bit lower to enable younger children to succeed when shooting. Thank you to the PTA for paying for these. We are still exploring a nest replacement with some recent quotes and suggested equipment. The wild area currently requires a canoe after the weekend's deluge so we've fenced it off!

Thank you to everyone who responded so kindly to my news of leaving at the end of the Summer Term. The governors have started the recruitment process and have lots of time to find an excellent candidate. I am here for the next seven months, however, during which we should see our school slowly returning to its former glory. I intend to make the most of every day, especially as we emerge from lockdown.

It is strange to think of half term but we do have one from Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February. After the February break it's just two more weeks before the proposed opening of schools. Fingers crossed!

Best wishes,
Liz Burton